

Subject: RM-10620

Date: 01-01-03

I would like to go on record as being opposed to the actions contained in RM-10620. The actions are clearly without merit and pander to the growing "give me something for nothing" society in this country. There currently exists a clear solution to the "problem". If a novice or advanced class operator desires to upgrade, then a few hours of study are in order followed by the successful completion of the applicable written exam. How simple can it be?

I do respect the wishes of some advanced class operators to remain as such to register their discontent with the lowered code requirements. If an advanced class operator has remained as such for 20 years or more, then it is reasonable to assume that there is no desire for a higher class license or interest in ham radio has waned completely. The same reasoning can be applied to those individuals who still hold a novice license. Presently, anyone still holding a novice class license implies that there is no longer any interest in ham radio whatsoever.

To demonstrate how silly and dangerous this "give me something for nothing" concept is, we simply have to apply it to other disciplines that require a license. For example, a person who has held a private pilot certificate for 20 years should now be allowed to apply for and receive a commercial multi-engine rating or perhaps an instrument rating based on nothing more than 20 years as a private pilot and without taking the written, oral, and flight tests. How about if a young person has trouble in high school and stays at it for maybe seven or eight years? Here you go, a nice high school diploma just for staying in school for a few years...never mind that you didn't make the necessary grades that most everyone else made. How long have you had that class D driver's license? Fifteen years you say? How about a nice class A license....no don't you worry about taking the test, just take your new commercial license and hop in that 80,000 pound tractor-trailer. Go ahead, you "earned" it just for having a regular class D license for fifteen years. See how crazy and dangerous this line of thinking is?

My last comment addresses the need for more operators for emergency communications. This need is listed as one reason for the application of the "give me something for nothing" proposal. Yes, we do need more ECOMM operators; however, if an individual has shown no motivation over the years to upgrade from novice class then there is certainly no motivation for ECOMM service. Being an effective asset for an ECOMM organization requires that an individual be motivated enough to attend and complete training courses on the basics for emergency communications. It is common knowledge that an untrained operator is worse than no operator at all. As a RACES officer, I certainly do not want anyone manning a communication position that is not trained in the basics of ECOMM. The training is simple, but many people just don't want to be bothered. Same goes for the upgrade of the current novice operators. If they refuse to get off their duff and take a simple written test to upgrade their license class, then they surely will not sit still for ECOMM training, and therefore will be completely unsuitable for any emergency communication activity.

Now that all the air is out of RM-10620, there is no basis for it. The "problem" will cure itself. Those novice operators who are not interested enough in the amateur radio service to upgrade via a simple test will just wither away. Those advanced operators who either wish to remain as such to make a statement, or fail to have a little motivation to take a simple written test should just be left alone. Attrition will see that we have the desired three class license structure in a few years.

John Roberts, WA4JR
Warren County Emergency Radio Officer